

BACK ISSUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS

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APPEARANCES

OCTOBER 2-4

SAN ANTONIO FANTASY FAIR
(Brad Foster, Scott Shawl, and Don Dougherty)

OCTOBER 2nd

ANDROMEDA BOOK SHOP
Santa Barbara, CA
(Deni Loubert, Trina Robbins)
"Independent Comics Day!"

NOVEMBER 27-29th

DALLAS FANTASY FAIR
(Brad Foster)

Ms. TREE

Published twelve times a year by Renegade Press, 2705 E. 7th Street, Long Beach, CA. 90804. MS. TREE is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed herein are fictional, and any resemblance to real people or incidents is coincidental. All contents © 1987 Max Collins and Terry Beatty. Any inquiries regarding use of the characters, images, or situations depicted should be addressed to Deni Loubert. No unauthorized reproduction allowed except for review or other journalistic purposes. Advertising rates furnished on request. Printed in Canada by Preney Print & Litho Inc., Windsor, Ontario.

NO. 41

OCTOBER 1987

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MAX COLLINS and
TERRY BEATTY'S

Ms. TREE

41
OCT

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IN U.S.
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CANADA



"COMING
OF
RAGE"

Renegade
Presents

JOHNNY DYNAMITE



Ms. TREE "COMING OF RAGE"

Chapter One:

**THIS
AWFUL
HERITAGE**

MICHELLE —
I KNOW WHAT YOU'D
LIKE ME TO SAY... THAT
I'M QUITTING MY JOB AT
THE CLUB... THAT I'M
GOING BACK TO
SCHOOL...

BUT
YOU'RE
NOT.

GATE 16-17



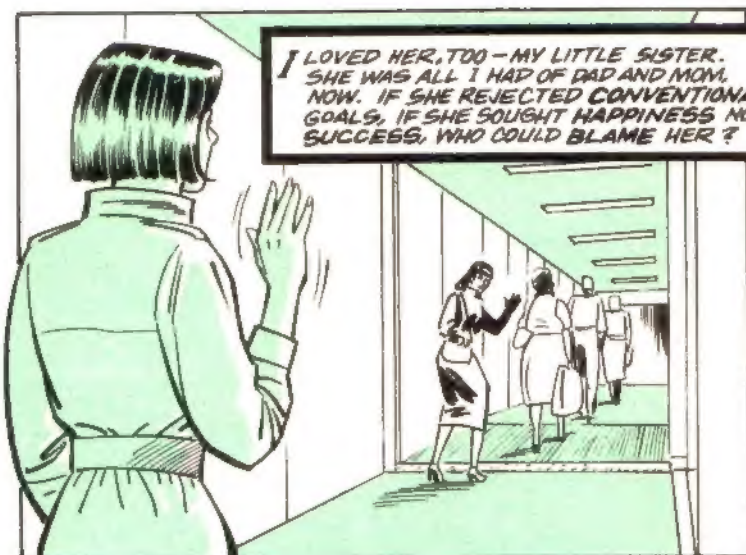
BY MAX COLLINS AND TERRY BEATTY WITH GARY KATO

NO. I LIKE MY LIFE THE
WAY IT IS. I MEAN YOU
NO DISRESPECT...
OR DAD'S MEMORY,
EITHER.

ANGIE, IT'S YOUR LIFE.
LIVE IT THE WAY YOU
CHOOSE. I'M SURE AS
HELL NO ROLE MODEL —

I LOVE
YOU,
MICHELLE.





I LOVED HER, TOO - MY LITTLE SISTER. SHE WAS ALL I HAD OF DAD AND MOM. NOW, IF SHE REJECTED CONVENTIONAL GOALS, IF SHE SOUGHT HAPPINESS NOT SUCCESS, WHO COULD BLAME HER?



SHE'D SEEN MOM DIE FROM A TUMOR - A BULLET IN THE BRAIN FROM GOD - AND NOW DAD WAS GONE, TOO... COURTESY OF A MAN-MADE BULLET.

SHE KNEW MY BUSINESS SUCCESS - AS OWNER OF TREE INVESTIGATIONS, INC. - WAS BASED LARGELY ON TWO REPUTATIONS: THAT OF MY LATE HUSBAND MIKE TREE, AND MY OWN, AS HIS "OBSESSED AVENGER" (AS ONE PAPER PUT IT).



MAYBE ANGIE WAS RIGHT. MAYBE THE RAT RACE WASN'T WORTH IT. MAYBE I COULD - WITH THE DEATH OF MY FATHER BEHIND ME - PUT VIOLENCE BEHIND ME, AS WELL -



THE WAR AGAINST THE MUERTA MOB FAMILY WAS, AFTER ALL, IN A STATE OF APPARENT TRUCE - DOMINIQUE MUERTA HAD MADE NO MOVES AGAINST ME OF LATE, NOR I HER...

PERHAPS IT WAS TIME TO BE A BUSINESSWOMAN. PERHAPS IT WAS TIME TO ENJOY SUCH SIMPLE PLEASURES AS WORK AND FAMILY -



BUT SOON I CAME DOWN OUT OF THE CLOUDS - CALIFORNIA, AND THE PSYCHO-BABBLE BUBBLE THAT WAS ITS PHILOSOPHY, WAS A DREAM BECOMING HARDER AND HARDER TO REMEMBER, AS THE WIDE-AWAKE CITY I CALLED HOME TOOK ME BACK.



NONETHELESS, THE NOTION OF WORKING, RATHER THAN SETTLING PRIVATE SCORES, LINGERED.

AND THE EXTENDED FAMILY OF MY OFFICE STAFF LOOKED VERY GOOD TO ME.



HIVA,
MS. TREE -
LONG TIME
NO SEE -

YOU'RE NOT
EVEN TAN!

HEARD YOU NAILED YOUR
DAD'S KILLER - GOOD.




BUT WHAT SOUNDED EVEN BETTER WAS THE VOICE OF MY SON... STEPHEN... MIKE, JR., WHO EVERY DAY REMINDED ME MORE OF HIS DAD.

YES, I'M BACK. TAKE
A CAB OVER HERE AT
FIVE AND I'LL BUY
YOU SUPPER.

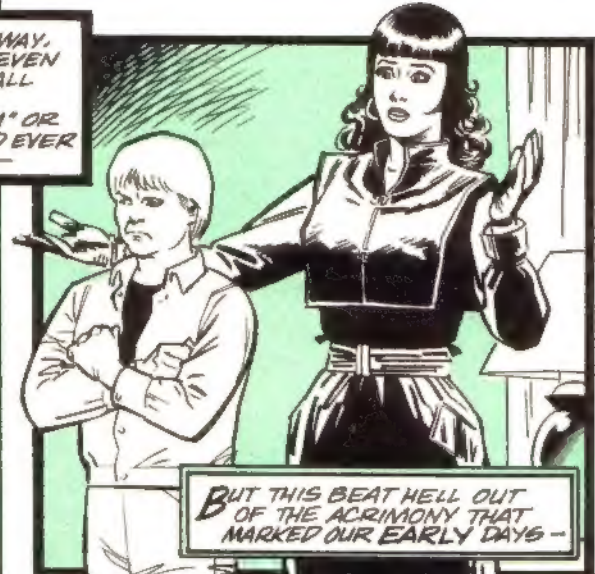


I'M GLAD YOU'RE OKAY.
IT'LL BE GOOD TO SEE YOU.
I MISSED YOU, MS. TREE.






WE'D COME A LONG WAY,
MIKE AND ME...EVEN
IF HE DID STILL CALL
ME "MS. TREE."
I DOUBTED "MOM" OR
"MOTHER" WOULD EVER
TAKE ITS PLACE—




BUT THIS BEAT HELL OUT
OF THE ACRIMONY THAT
MARKED OUR EARLY DAYS—




MS. TREE—YOU'RE
SUPPOSED TO CALL
MR. HAND'S DOCTOR
AS SOON AS
YOU CAN—


THANKS,
EFFIE—
I'LL DO
THAT—



I'M AFRAID MR. HAND
IS BACK IN THE
HOSPITAL—HE'S
BEEN IGNORING
THE SEVERITY
OF HIS WOUND—
HE HAS MONTHS
OF REHAB
AHEAD OF
HIM—



IT DOESN'T SURPRISE
ME, DOCTOR—I WAS
AFRAID HE'D COME
BACK TO WORK
PREMATURELY...
MIKE IS VERY
IMPORTANT
TO HIM...
NO, I'LL
HANDLE
IT—



BUT MS. TREE, I'M FEELING
BLOODY GREAT—THE LAD
NEEDS HIS TUTOR AND HIS
BODYGUARD—AND BOTH
OF 'EM ARE ME!

"AND YOU WILL BE AGAIN," I TOLD HIM. "BUT I'VE MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE THAT WILL GIVE YOU THE TIME YOU NEED TO FULLY RECUPERATE —"



THE TRUTH WAS I HADN'T MADE ANY ARRANGEMENTS — THOUGH THERE WAS AN OPTION I'D CONSIDERED, AND TURNED AWAY FROM TIME AND AGAIN —



BUT BY THE TIME MIKE AND I WENT TO SUPPER, THE DECISION — AND THE ARRANGEMENTS — HAD BEEN MADE —

DIDN'T SOMEBODY TRY TO SHOOT YOU HERE, ONE TIME?

YES — SOMEBODY TRIED.



I THINK DAD WOULD BE PRETTY PROUD OF YOU — ALL THE LOWLIFES YOU PUT OUT OF ACTION IN THE LAST COUPLE YEARS —

STEVE N-TRINA



IT HAS ITS DRAWBACKS, MIKE — IT MAKES LIFE DANGEROUS... AND NOT JUST FOR ME — FOR THOSE AROUND ME — THOSE I CARE ABOUT —





COME ON - DON'T SWEAT MY "CHILDHOOD" - I'M NOT A KID!

MAYBE NOT - BUT YOUR EDUCATION DOES CONCERN ME -



THAT'S WHY I'VE MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOU TO ATTEND A PRIVATE SCHOOL...



I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! HOW CAN YOU DO THIS TO ME?

GREENWOOD IS A FINE SCHOOL - WITH A BEAUTIFUL CAMPUS... IT'LL BE LIKE COLLEGE -



WHY ARE YOU THROWING ME OUT? TURNING YOUR BACK ON ME?



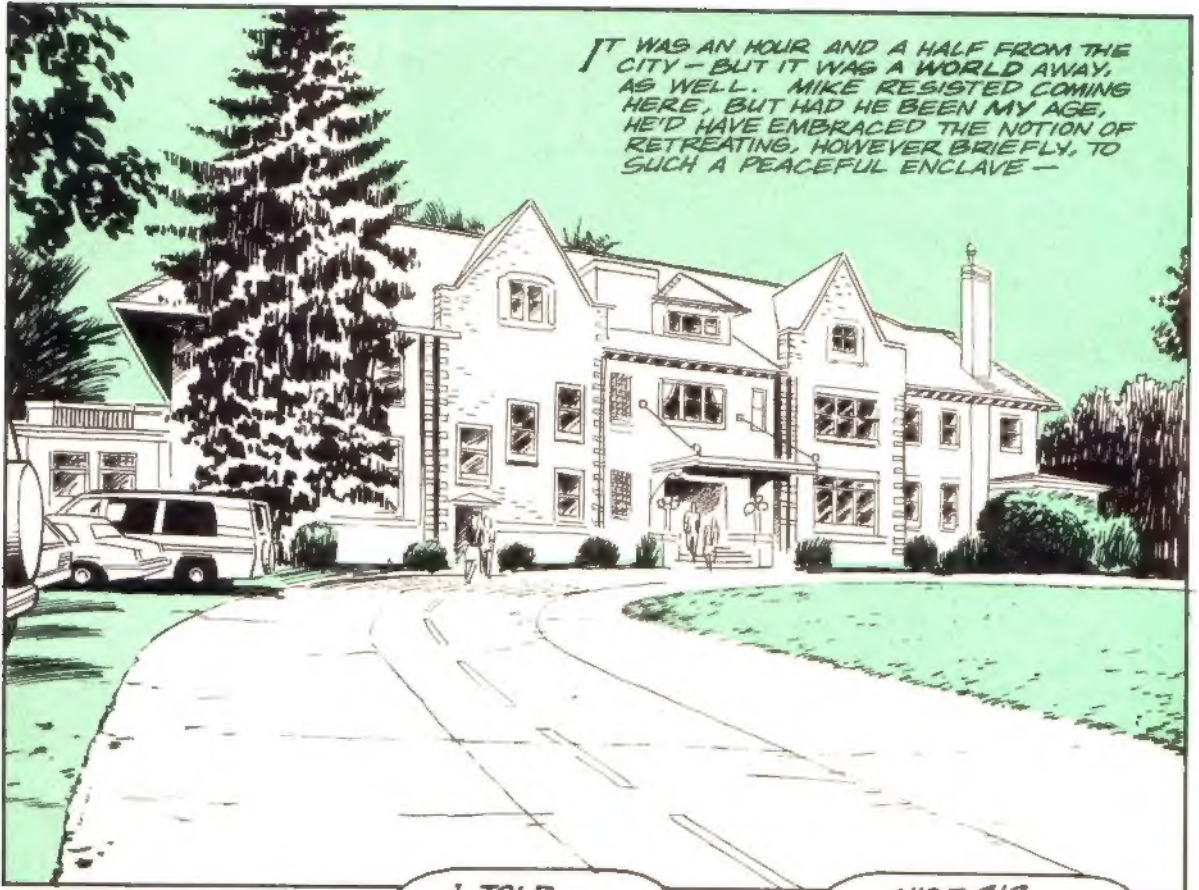
I'M NOT - ALL I ASK IS YOU ATTEND ONE SEMESTER - AFTER WHICH YOU CAN COME HOME... MR. HAND SHOULD BE READY BY THAT TIME -

WHY CAN'T I GO TO SCHOOL HERE?



GREENWOOD IS A SPECIAL SORT OF SCHOOL - IT'S SAFE - VERY WELL PROTECTED -

IT WAS AN HOUR AND A HALF FROM THE CITY - BUT IT WAS A WORLD AWAY, AS WELL. MIKE RESISTED COMING HERE, BUT HAD HE BEEN MY AGE, HE'D HAVE EMBRACED THE NOTION OF RETREATING, HOWEVER BRIEFLY, TO SUCH A PEACEFUL ENCLAVE -



I TOLD YOU IT WAS NICE - YOU'LL LIKE IT HERE -

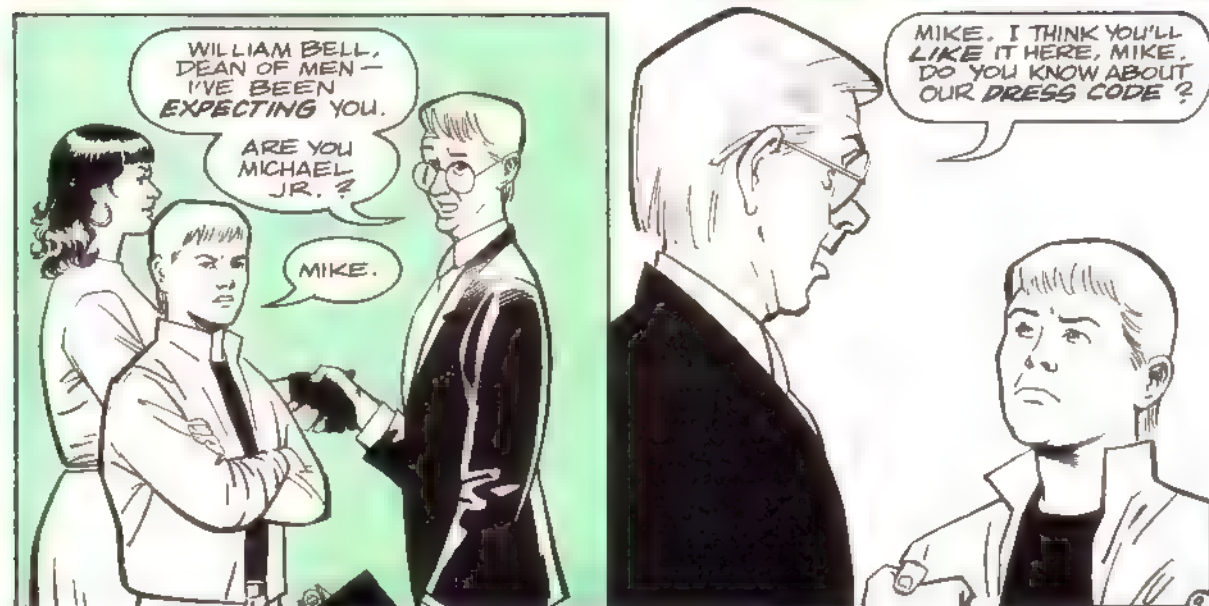
NICE ?! ? IT'S DULL - HOW CAN YOU PULL A KID OUT OF THE CITY AND TOSS HIM IN A CEMETERY LIKE THIS ?



I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T A "KID" -

DON'T DO THIS TO ME, MS. TREE - TAKE ME BACK HOME.

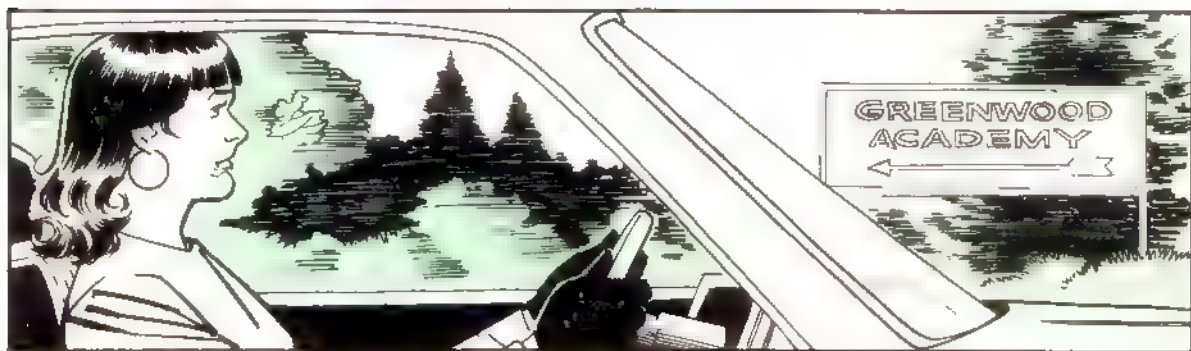


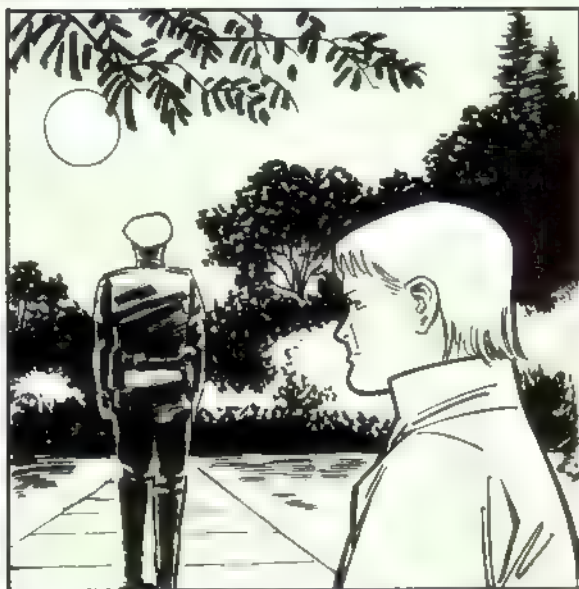


THE "DEAN OF MEN" SHOWED US AROUND THE CAMPUS, BUT MIKE WASN'T IMPRESSED — AND WHEN IT CAME TIME TO SAY GOODBYES —



GO HOME MS. TREE — JUST GO HOME.





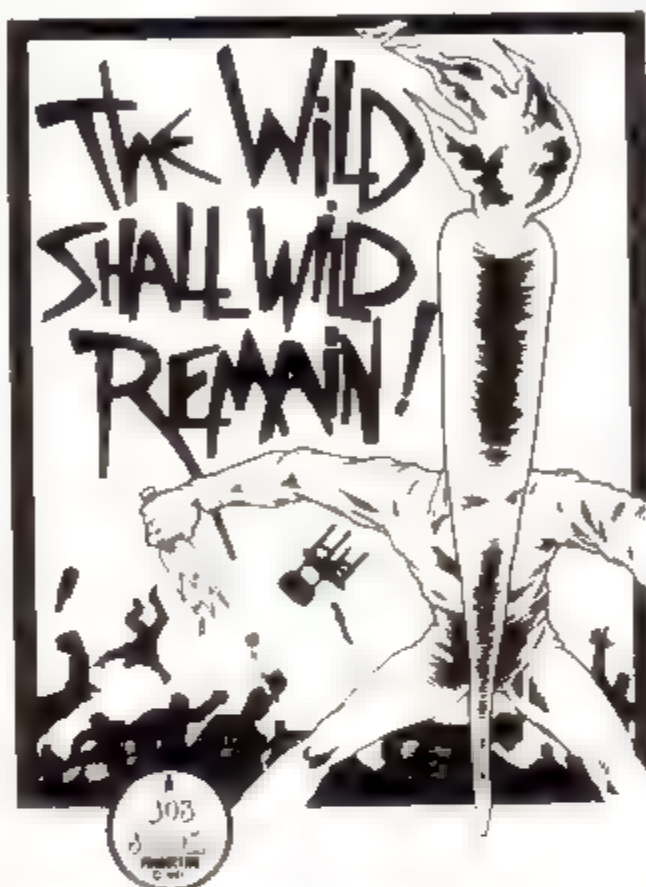


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This listing is just a small sample of the many items in the mystery, pulps, science fiction and fantasy fields we list in our monthly catalog. A copy is sent free with any order or send .50 for the latest listing.

MAX ALLAN COLLINS NOVELS (AND STORIES)

*SPREE - TOR HC, the first Nolan novel in six years. Happily retired, running a restaurant in a shopping mall, ex-thief Nolan (and Jon) must help the revenge-happy Comforts loot the entire mall, or Nolan's girl friend Sherry will die! Recommended. 311 pages. All of our copies feature a bookplate signed by Max Allan Collins laid in...\$15.95.

*PRIMARY TARGET - Foul Play Press HC, the first Quarry novel in ten years! When he refuses to become involved in the assassination of a Presidential candidate, Quarry becomes an immediate loose end. After his pregnant wife is murdered, Quarry is...unhappy. Recommended. All copies feature a bookplate signed by Max Allan Collins laid in....\$15.95.

BLACK LIZARD ANTHOLOGY OF CRIME FICTION - trade paperback. Features a new Nate Heller short story, "Scrap," by Collins, plus the Collins edited/revised Jim Thompson novella, "This World, Then the Fireworks." Also Ed Gorman, Harlan Ellison, Bill Pronzini, etc. Recommended...\$8.95.

HARDBOILED - Spring '87 issue. Features "Enter Nolan," the previously unpublished (circa '68) first Nolan story. Future collector's item. \$3.

MIDNIGHT HAUL - Foul Play Press HC. Critically praised non-series suspense novel about the toxic-waste dumping racket \$14.95.

*THE MILLION-DOLLAR WOUND - TOR reprint of the 3rd Heller novel. A Shamus nominee for best hardcover novel of 1986. Highly recommended.....\$3.95.

*MALLORY, TOR paperbacks: NO CURE FOR DEATH, \$3.50; THE BABY BLUE RIP-OFF, \$2.95.

THE DARK CITY - Bantam paperback. Eliot Ness in Cleveland ... \$3.50.

OTHER NEW BOOKS:

*THE SPIDER - Bob Sampson's study of this great pulp hero. All copies have plate signed by author....\$15.95 trade paper.

*NEW ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES - C & C HC. New Holmes stories by such authors as Loren Estleman, Stuart Kaminsky and (in a 30-page tale) Stephen King! Sure to be a popular item \$18.95.

NEW MYSTERIES



208 pages, 5 1/2" x 8 1/4"
ISBN 0-88150-098-4, cloth \$14.95
Publication: October
A Foul Play Press Book



Primary Target

A Quarry Novel

By Max Allan Collins

When they offer him a million dollars to come out of his quiet, lakeside retirement, Quarry turns the contract down. He knows too well that one does not assassinate a presidential candidate and survive to spend the fee.

But when those who tried to hire him decide to tie off the loose end that Quarry has suddenly become, they make two mistakes: they kill Quarry's pregnant wife; and they fail to kill him.

Primary Target, the first Quarry novel in ten years and the hitman's first hard-cover appearance, is a darkly disturbing political thriller that will shock, surprise, and yet delight readers meeting the laconic killer for the first time, as well as the enthusiastic fans who made Quarry a cult favorite.

MAX ALLAN COLLINS, who lives in Iowa with his wife and son, has written twenty-five novels of suspense, including the four earlier Quarry novels, the widely praised *Midnight Haul*, and the award winning historical mystery, *True Detective*, with its several sequels. He is also one of the top writers in the comics field, scripting the Dick Tracy newspaper strip and several comic books, including *Batman* and his own *Ms. Tree* and *Wild Dog*.



Spree

MAX ALLAN COLLINS

Nolan finally put it all together: His criminal past is dead and buried, he owns a restaurant in a small shopping mall; Sherry loves him. He couldn't ask for anything more. Then Nolan's past screams into his present. Coleman Comfort believes Nolan killed his brother and he wants revenge—now! Comfort kidnaps Sherry and delivers an ultimatum: Help him pick the mall clean during one late night "shopping spree," or Sherry will die.

Collins, the author of *True Detective*, *True Crime* and *The Million-Dollar Wound* (all SMP) as well as the "Mallory" series, is one of the leading suspense writers in the country today. His work has been praised by critics: "Mr. Collins has an outwardly artless style that conceals a great deal of art." (*New York Times*); "Collins has wit and style and stays on track." (*New York Daily News*). In *Spree*, Collins weaves a tale of crime and suspense as tension-filled as the novels of Lawrence Sanders and delivers it with the speed and punch of Elmore Leonard.

MAX ALLAN COLLINS lives in Muscatine, Iowa.

Suspense 320 pages 5 1/2 x 8 1/4
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A Tor Book

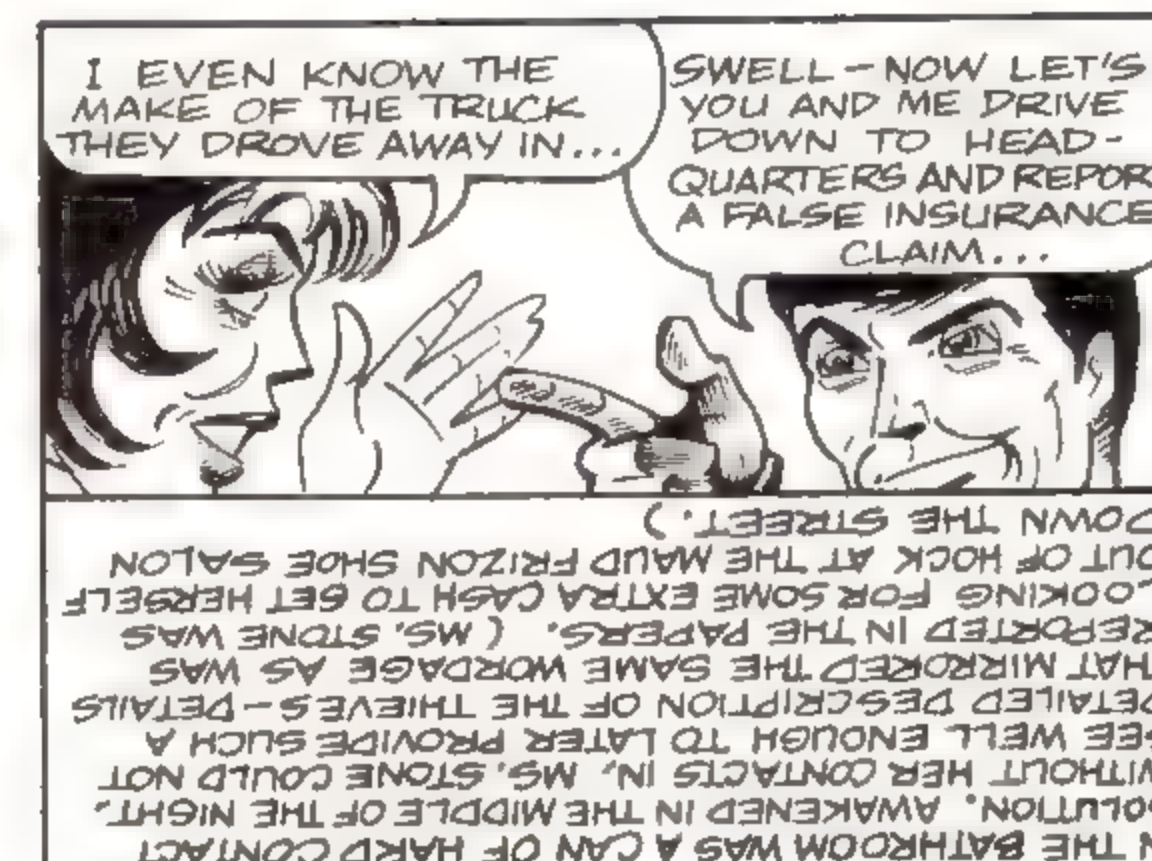
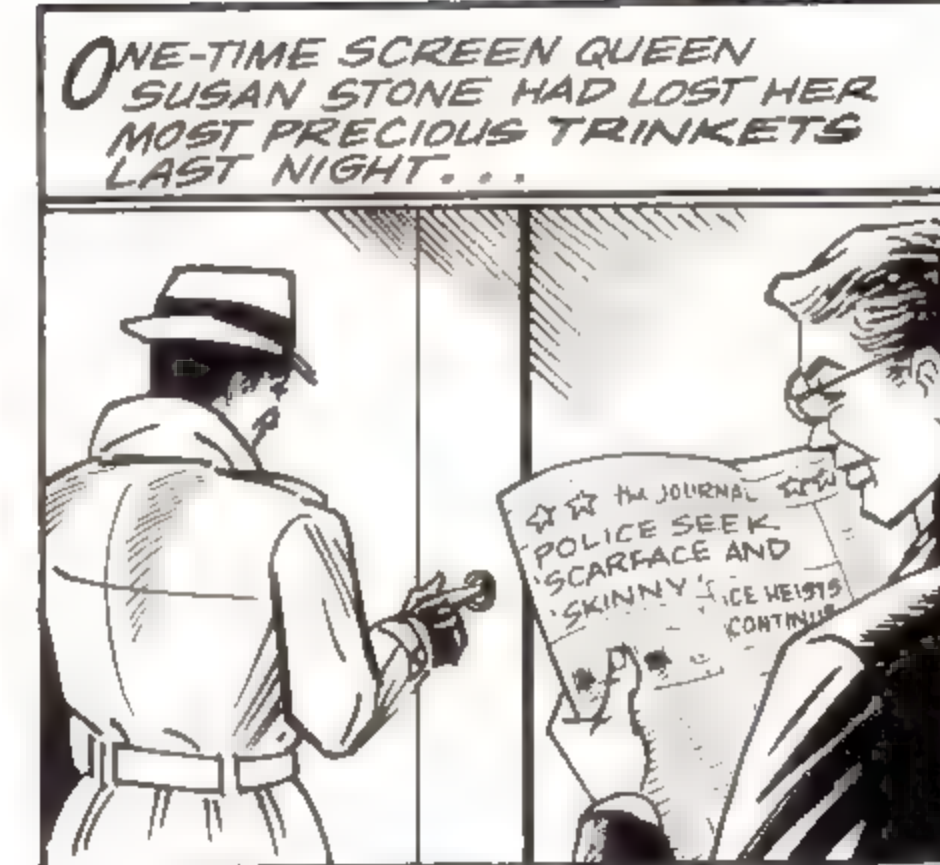
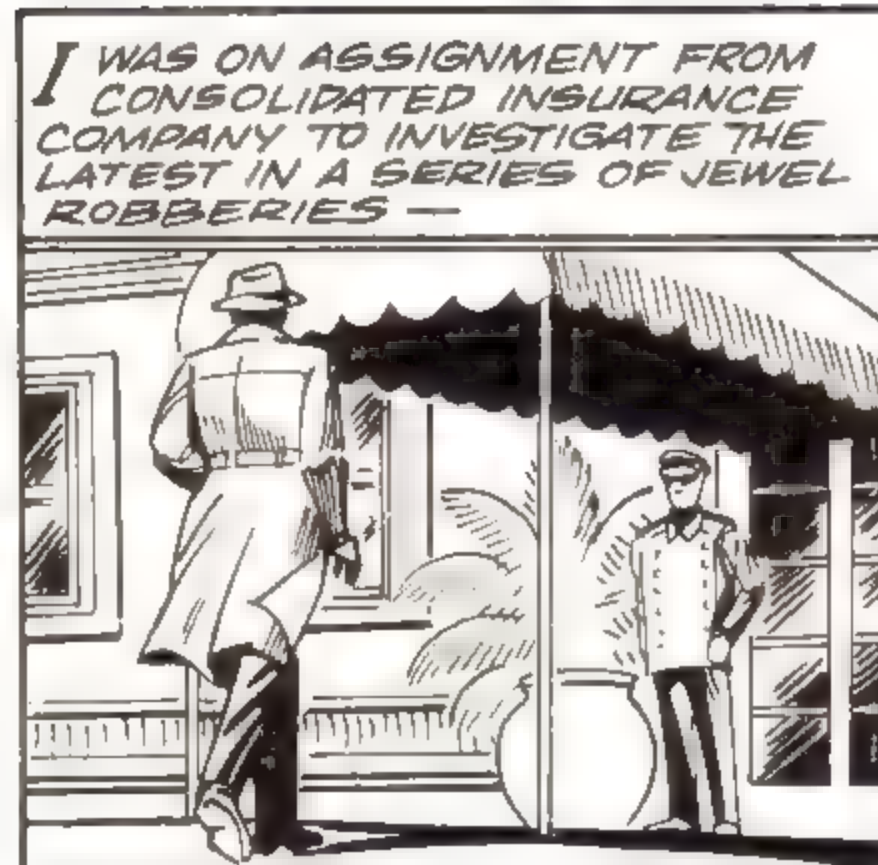
► *Imagine: A shopping mall at your disposal...and a gun to your head*

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TERMS: \$2 postage/insurance. Alternate choices appreciated. Self-addressed stamped envelopes appreciated. Checks must clear.

MODESTY BLAISE - Few originals from this classic British strip have ever appeared on the collector's market; we have turned up a small batch of them - a rare opportunity for Modesty fans. All of these strips are by Romero; all have at least some pasted-up dialogue balloons, applied after the art was drawn. These should go quickly, so alternate choices are advised.

#2411 - Two panel strip with Willie, Tarrant and Modesty in first panel, night commando raid in second. \$100.

#2418 - Modesty and Willie both shown, nice of both. \$100.

#2422 - Modesty and Willie in Medieval garb. \$100.

#2273 - Willie and Tarrant; great Willie close-up. \$100.

OTHER BRITISH STRIPS:

CAROL DAY - famed strip by the British "Raymond," David Wright. Moody nighttime strip with Carol nicely shown. Rare. \$100.

GARTH - F.272. Beautiful example of Frank Bellamy strip with Garth and nude beauty. On pg 22 of Titan's Garth Book Two. \$100.

DAILY STRIPS:

CAPTAIN EASY, 3-27-'45 - Easy in all three panels; beautiful '40s babe. Excellent early example of Leslie Turner. \$100.

CAPTAIN EASY - 1979 inked sketch of Easy, classic smiling profile, signed by Leslie Turner; very attractive. \$30.

DICK TRACY - Gould. 1-6-'56. Joe Period and early Lizz. \$60.

DICK TRACY - Fletcher/Collins. 12-2-'80. Tracy, Torcher. \$60.

THE GRAVIES, 4-28-'57 - little-seen TRACY "topper" humor strip by Gould, with color guide. Extremely rare. \$100.

OZARK IKE - 9-3-'46. Early example with fabulous babe. \$75.

OZARK IKE - 6-16-'48. Dinah, Ozark, Spike, Moran. Nice. \$75.

JOE PALOOKA - early '50s. Joe and Knobby (in all three panels) go to the New York State Boxing Commission. \$75.

SECRET AGENT X-9 - 1-5-'51. Graff. Thug captures X-9's girl. \$20.

SMILIN' JACK - 8-27-'63. Mosley. Smilin' Jack Jr., a babe and a bear - and a plane, of course. \$20.

TERRY AND THE PIRATES 4/8 and 4/9 - '47; nice early Wunder. Pretty girl and villain - no Terry. \$30 for the pair.

WINNIE WINKLE - 11-1-'58. Winnie and Janie model fashions "you" created; two panel strip, nice of its kind. \$20.

COMIC BOOK pages:

JOE PALOOKA #93 - great cover! Has all logo material, clean. \$100

HECKLE AND JECKLE - "Monkey Business," 1-pg story from '56. \$50

TALES TO ASTONISH #11, pg 16 - nice silver age Don Heck pg. \$40

TALES TO ASTONISH #94, pg 9 - Everett Submariner! Dorma too. \$200

MIKE HAMMER artist Ed Robbins - three pages from a sexy, action-packed "Lucy Fuhr" story (appeared in VAMPIRELLA - don't know the number) by the artist of the Mike Hammer strip, originals from which are virtually unknown. Pgs. 4, 5, 6. \$50 each.

JOHNNY DYNAMITE



I HAD NEVER KILLED A DAME BEFORE. BUT THIS DAME... WHOEVER SHE WAS... WAS SOMETHING SPECIAL. I WOULD KILL HER. SHE WAS THE ONE WHO GAVE ME THE PATCH... WITH ME IT WAS....

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

I WAS JAMMED IN AT A RED TRAFFIC LIGHT WHEN I SAW THE DISH STRIDING TOWARD ME...

WITH HALF THE CITY ON THE SIDEWALK SHE PICKS ME FOR A CAMERA SHOT!

HOLD THAT POSE MISTER!

UH UH! NOT IF I CAN JOCKEY THIS CRATE INTO THE HOLE UP AHEAD!

I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE SOME KIND OF A SHAKEDOWN, BUT EVEN I DIDN'T EXPECT WHAT WAS COMING!

AIIVVVV! #7!# MY EYE! MY EYE!



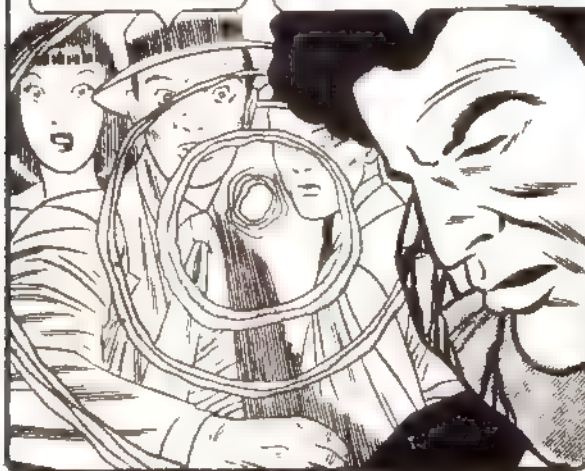
JEEZ! THAT DIRTY #?#!



YOU #?!! LOUSY NEW DRIVERS! WHY DON'T YA LEARN HOW TO DRIVE!

OH, CHRISTMAS! CALL A COP! AND SOMEBODY GET AN AMBULANCE!

NEVER MIND ME! GET THAT #?!!%! GET THAT DAME IN THE GREEN DRESS.. WITH THE CAMERA!



WHAT'S ALL THE TROUBLE HERE?

THIS GUY IS HURT BAD. KEEPS YELLIN' ABOUT A DAME. I HEARD LIKE A SHOT, THEN HIS CAR WHAMMED INTO MINE!



I CAME TO IN THE HOSPITAL, LOOKING UP INTO HENNESSY'S FACE..

WHY ARE YOU HERE, HENNESSY? I WASN'T KNOCKED OFF! OR WAS I?

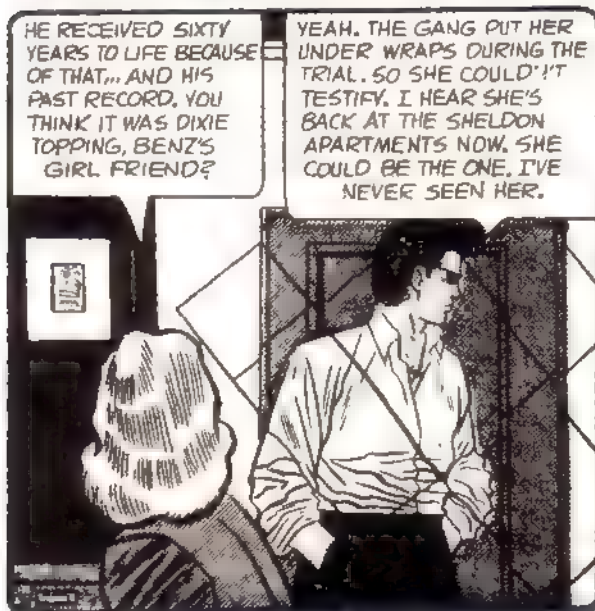
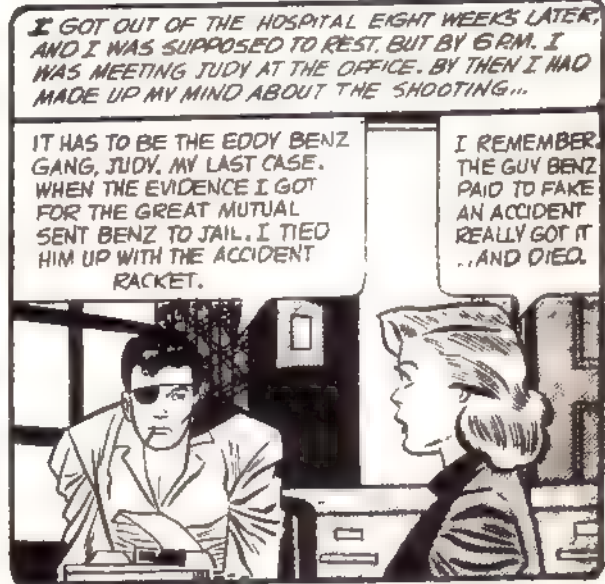
IT WAS CLOSE. I WANT TO FIND OUT WHO SHOT YOU, JOHNNY. YOU'VE BEEN YELLING ABOUT A DAME IN A GREEN DRESS!



I NEVER SAW THE DAME IN MY LIFE, LUKE. YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE MY WORD FOR IT!

IF YOU SAY SO, JOHNNY. FUNNY THAT YOU WOULDN'T KNOW A DAME THAT HATED YOU *THAT* MUCH!





I WEDGED A FOOT IN THE CRACK OF THE DOOR WHEN IT OPENED. AS I FORCED MY WAY IN, DIXIE TOPPING STEPPED BACK...

DON'T COME ANY FARTHER JOHNNY DYNAMITE! YOU'LL REALLY GET IT THIS TIME, FOR KEEPS!

I STOOD GRIM AND ANGRY, GLOWERING AT THE GIRL. SHE SEEMED TO WAVER UNSTEADILY. I SAID...

YOU'RE NOT THE DAME WHO SHOT OUT MY LAMP!

HUH?

NO! NO, I DIDN'T! I DIDN'T SHOOT YOU! I KNEW YOU... FROM YOUR PICTURE IN THE PAPERS.

I SAW HER KNEES BEGIN TO FOLD AND I GRABBED HER...

"I'M SCARED... TERRIBLY SCARED! IF I COULD ONLY GET OUT OF IT!... BU' THEY WATCH ME NIGHT AND DAY... EDDY'S GANG!"

I FELL IN LOVE WITH EDDY AND HE PROMISED ME MARRIAGE... BUT HE NEVER KEPT HIS PROMISE. I KNOW WHY NOW... ONE REASON, BUT WHEN I LEARNED HOW HE LIVED I DIDN'T WANT MARRIAGE... FROM HIM! OH... JOHNNY!... JOHNNY!

WHAT YOU NEED IS SOME PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, HONEY!

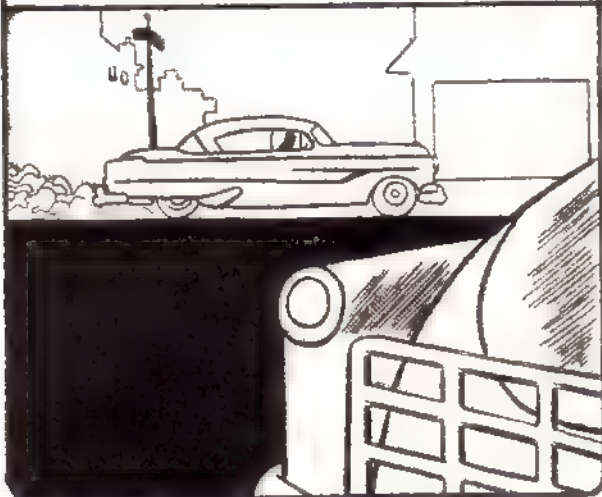
I COULD TELL YOU WHO SHOT YOU, JOHNNY, BUT NOT HERE! I'D BE AFRAID TO TELL YOU HERE!

LOCK UP TIGHT, HONEY. THE POLICE WILL BE HERE IN AN HOUR. THEY'LL TAKE YOU WHERE YOU NEVER NEED BE AFRAID AGAIN THEN YOU CAN TELL ME

I LEFT AND PHONED LUKE HENNESSY FROM A DRUG STORE

YEAH, LUKE. YOU CAN GET IT THROUGH FAST. KEEP THE KID SAFE UNTIL YOU CAN GET HER OUT OF TOWN. SHE'S SCARED TO DEATH!

I DROVE BACK TO MY APARTMENT FIGURING I'D GET SOMETHING TO EAT AND GO DOWN TO HEAD-QUARTERS AND FIND OUT WHAT I COULD FROM DIXIE.



I SCARCELY NOTICED THE BLACK CAR PULLING FROM THE CURB BEHIND ME. THEN I CAUGHT ON ALL AT ONCE AND REACHED FOR MY ROD.



I DIDN'T DROP A MOMENT TOO SOON. DEATH RATTLED ABOVE MY HEAD.



I WAS SO MAD I EMPTIED MY ROD AT THE BIG BLACK CAN, HOPING I MIGHT WING THE DRIVER OR AT LEAST SOMEBODY ELSE INSIDE...



I SHOVED A NEW CLIP IN MY GUN AND GOT BACK IN MY LOAD.

SOMEBODY SAW ME GO IN "OR LEAVE," DIXIE'S PLACE! AND DIDN'T WANT ME TO KNOW WHAT SHE **MIGHT HAVE TOLD ME!**

NUTS! THEN IF THEY THINK SHE TALKED...



I DROVE WITH MY GAS PEDAL ALL THE WAY DOWN AND BREATHED A PRAYER THAT I'D MAKE IT IN TIME!





I MADE THE
SHELTON IN
NOTHING FLAT..



I TORE UP TO
THE ENTRANCE
AND BARGED
IN...

DIXIE! MY
GOD!



A KNIFE! THE #!#!%! THE
DIRTY LOUSY #!%!@!!



THEN TO TOP THE GRIM IRONY OF IT ALL...

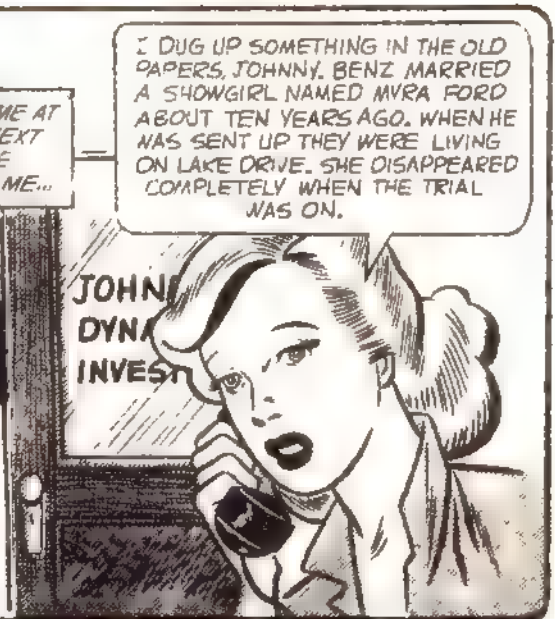
YOU'RE A LITTLE LATE. NOBODY
CAN PROTECT HER... OR HURT
HER NOW. CALL HENNESSY,
WILL YOU? I'LL GET IN TOUCH
WITH HIM LATER.

OKAY, SHAMUS.
WE'LL TAKE OVER
NOW. HOPE YOU
CAN CLEAR
YOURSELF
WITH LUKE.



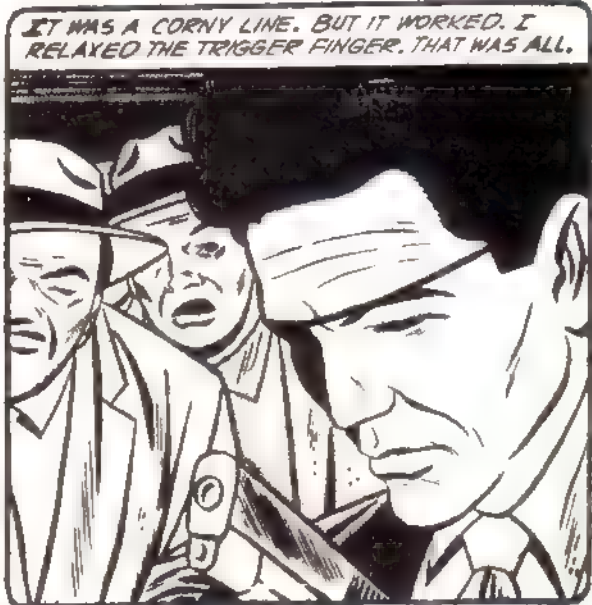
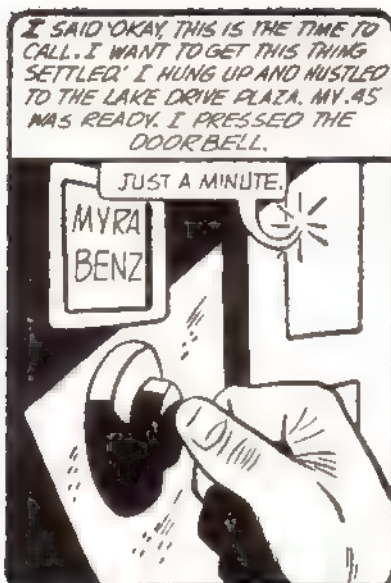
I WAS TOO BUSHED TO ANSWER
THE COPS. AFTER ALL IT WAS MY
FIRST DAY OUT OF THE HOSPITAL.
I CRAWLED HOME AND SLEPT..

JUDY RUNG ME AT
EIGHT THE NEXT
MORNING. THE
PHONE WOKE ME...



I DUG UP SOMETHING IN THE OLD
PAPERS. JOHNNY BENZ MARRIED
A SHOWGIRL NAMED MYRA FORD
ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO. WHEN HE
WAS SENT UP THEY WERE LIVING
ON LAKE DRIVE. SHE DISAPPEARED
COMPLETELY WHEN THE TRIAL
WAS ON.

JOHN
DYNA
INVEST



THE ROOF SEEMED TO DROP IN. MYRA HAD FOUR GOONS HIDING IN THE KID'S BEDROOM! THEY HAD BEEN WAITING FOR MY CALL, I SUPPOSE, AFTER SEEING ME AT DIXIE'S! THEY RUSHED ME. I COULDN'T LEVEL THE AS.



I TWISTED AND SENT MY FOOT IN FRONT OF THE FIRST GOON. THEY ALL PILED UP...



FOR A PART OF A MINUTE THERE WAS PLENTY TO DO...



I WAS ALMOST READY TO GO ALONG WITH THE YARN MYRA BENZ TOLD. BUT IN THE MELEE THAT FOLLOWED, I MANAGED TO FIGURE IT STRAIGHT.

YOU LOVE THAT KID? YOU AND EDDY BENZ? YOU OUGHT TO! HE STARTED YOU ON YOUR LOUSY "ACCIDENT" RACKET! YOU SHOVED HIM IN FRONT OF A CAR! **YOUR OWN KID!**



"YOU COLLECTED TOO," I WENT ON, "BECAUSE THE WITNESSES WHO SAW IT HAPPEN SUDDENLY WERE AFRAID TO TESTIFY... OR NEVER SHOWED UP AT ALL! IT WAS A NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT... AND THE CASE WAS SETTLED OUT OF COURT... I DIDN'T REMEMBER... UNTIL NOW!"

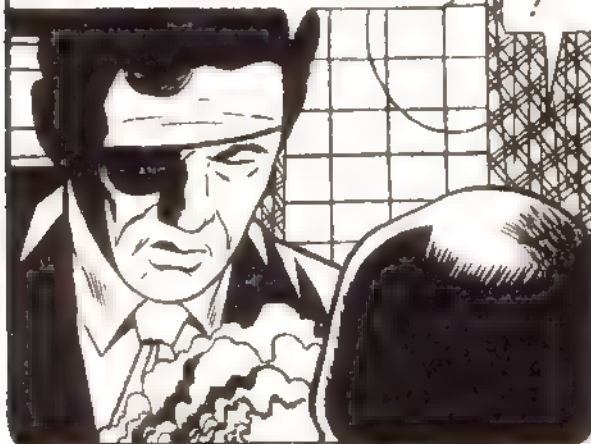
SO HERE'S A SLUG WITH LITTLE WILLIE'S COMPLIMENTS!

**EEEEEE!
N-NO!**



YOU DIDN'T HATE ME ON THE KID'S ACCOUNT! YOU HATED ME FOR SPOILING A SWEET RACKET! SO HERE'S ONE FOR YOU... RIGHT IN THE EYE! LIKE THE ONE YOU GAVE ME! I COULD CALL IT SELF DEFENSE, COULDN'T I?

**A
R
R
R
G!**



WHEN LUKE HENNESSY ANSWERED MY CALL, I WAS WALKING THE BEDROOM FLOOR, WITH THE POOR CRIPPLED KID, ASLEEP IN MY ARMS. HE'D GET CARE NOW. MAYBE SOMEDAY HE'D WALK. THE CITY HOSPITALS ARE GREAT PLACES...



ALL AT ONCE MY EYE ACHED DULLY... AND I FELT THE NEED OF JUDY'S COMFORTING ARMS!



Address all letters of comment to:

SWAK

P O BOX 1007
MUSCATINE, IA
52761

Dear Respondent,

It was the mid sixties, during the Charlton renaissance under the hand of Dick Giordano, and my pubescent self picked up a copy of a comic titled **Thunderbolt**, (about a martial arts agent in a colorful skin tight costume), which I saved, and which I treasure to this day

The art blew my mind: it was magnificent, and very stylized. The artist's name was a mystery, and in the letter's page his anonymity was preserved due to his wishes. He simply signed his work PAM without any fanfare

What a delight it is to discover that this talented artist's name is Pete Morris, and that I will be able at last to enjoy more of this excellent cartoonist's fine art. Indeed, a whole new generation of readers can now discover his work

To these classic Johnny Dynamite stories by Mr. Morris, I say: Welcome to the pages of MS. TREE!

I am annoyed by several aspects of the particular story you ran. The two center panels on page eight were not drawn by PAM. These panels represent a gap in the story, a missing interval of events. During this gap Greta disguised herself as the man with the limp, killed her father, screamed, and faked her own death

Why was all that omitted? Also, who was the old man who called for help? The gaps pre-occupy it gets annoying

Didn't you read the story? Why was there no attendant apology for, or explanation of the strange art, and the story gaps? You just **dumped** it on us. How sweet of you. Thank you so much

The narrative was like the art, very stylized, but not to my taste. I found it dull, and cut it, which only serves to make MAC's work appear all the more sparkling, and uncensored (Fred Astaire was no fool: he paired himself with Ginger Rogers, whose dancing was just not as good as his, he was hardly the greatest dancer in the world, but next to her he was never upstaged). Granted, MAC is a big Johnny Dynamite fan. I'm a fan of PAM's art. I just hope the upcoming reprints won't be as flawed as, and will be more readable than this first one was

The Mist Tree tale was just okay. I initially dismissed it as being hype for the new reprint co-feature. I anticipate better, getting into the character of Ms. Tree, and not simply using her as a promotional device

David Malcolm Porta, SACRAMENTO, CA

David, as has been mentioned in previous SWAKs, the first two "Johnny Dynamite" stories we reprinted were the **last** two written and drawn, and were used first only because they were the only stories available in black and white. As I'm sure you know, subsequently we began at the beginning of the "Dynamite" series. Also, those two stories (particularly the one you discuss, were somewhat butchered at the hands of the comics code (earlier DYNAMITE comics were decidedly non-Code). You are right. I should have commented on these aspects of the tale in that issue's SWAK. I do apologize. As it turned out, however, negotiations for the rights to "Johnny Dynamite" went through more quickly than we'd expected, and deadline demands required that we push the new format through immediately. The crossover story was meant as an introduction to "Johnny Dynamite" within the context of Ms. Tree's world, and it did fill in some important background on Mike Mist.

Dear Mr. Collins,

I've always valued the importance of the writer in all fields of

entertainment. Unfortunately there are a lot of hacks who can just churn out story after story which just barely pass for entertainment. Luckily there are also top writers who can churn out stories of exceptional quality. We all know which writers we'd put on these lists so there's no need giving my opinions. We could differ anyway. Needless to say I'd place you in the latter category. I've been a fan since I read **Batman** #402 and 403. This led me to MS. TREE (not an easy comic to collect in Australia if you're a late starter) and even to the **DICK TRACY** strip, and finally back to **BATMAN**.

Now, having enjoyed your comic writing I was naturally interested when you started mentioning novels. Here's the problem. As far as I can tell none of your novels are available in Australia. So is it possible to give me details of who publishes your books or put me onto someone who does overseas mail orders? Also, can you do a rundown on what exactly you have written? Comics, novels, whatever. Speaking of anything have you ever written any scripts for film or television? Just interested

Anyway, back to your work I do know of. I can't understand all the fuss over Ms. Tree killing people. I mean, holey mackerel (to quote Punky Brewster) the shootings make sense in the context of the stories and characters. I mean, it's not as if you're doing it like a Brian De Palma movie. Anyway you've got another fan Mr. Collins. Love the Minute Mist-eries by the way, especially "You Only Live Once."

Hope you can help me find your books. Keep up the great work in all your titles.

Brett Danalake, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

Glad to hear from a reader from the Land Down Under (or, as Terry and I like to think of it, the country that brought us "Prisoner Cell Block H"). My days as regular scripter on **BATMAN** are behind me, although I hope to do at least one more BAT-project before the decade's out. As for finding my books, some of them should be available in Australia, but your best bet would be to buy them mail order from Robert Weinberg, who advertises regularly in these very pages. Thanks for your interest, Brett.

Dear Max and Terry,

It's been a long time since I've written to MS. TREE -- mainly because I haven't been that thrilled with the stories lately -- but when you issued the challenge to guess who drew "Johnny Dynamite and the Maddened Teller" in issue 37, I had to respond. I've always prided myself on being able to recognize artists' styles. The 1950's isn't really my period and I'm not sure who was around back then and who wasn't, but I would have to guess the artist was John Buscema, based on his way of drawing faces in profile and folds in clothing. If I'm wrong, please don't embarrass me by printing this, but if I'm right, do I get a prize? I **really** need the fifth volume in the Nolan series (hint! hint!) it's the only one I haven't been able to find yet.

Are you still interested in having readers recommend their favorite mystery novelists for the benefit of others? Lately I've discovered Barbara Paul, who writes excellent mysteries set in a theatrical and literary milieu. Her best ones are **The Fourth Wall**, **The Renewable Virgin** and **Kill Fee**. Also worth reading are **First Gravedigger** and **Your Eyelids Are Growing Heavy**. The above are all in a serious vein; Paul also has written some light mysteries, very tongue-in-cheek and not entirely to my taste, e.g. **But He Was Already Dead When I Got There**.

and **A Cadenza For Caruso**. Opera lovers might enjoy the latter, and also her latest, **Prima Donna At Large**.

MS TREE is starting to get more interesting with the latest story focusing on her family background. I don't enjoy one-issue stories like the ones you had been offering, there's not enough room for development. Too bad I was never a DRAGNET fan, the references to Ms. Tree's father are leaving me cold, alas.

Randi Eldevik MINNEAPOLIS MN

The mystery artist is apparently not John Buscema (though that's whose work it reminds me of), more on this, later. I have no extra copies of NOLAN #5 HARD CASH (in fact, fans with extra copies who feel sorry for me should feel free to send them my way. I promise to spread 'em around). There is, however, a possibility that one of my paperback publishers will be reissuing the NOLANs, I will keep you posted. In the meantime, the first NOLAN in some while - SPREE is out in hardcover right now, and some early, previously unpublished Nolan material (circa '68) is being published in the fanzine HARDBOILED (usually available from Bob Weinberg). The Spring '87 issue features "Enter Nolan," a short story, and the first, never published Nolan novel, MOURN THE LIVING, begins a four-part serialization in the next issue of HARDBOILED.

Dear Max

How good was issue #37 of MS TREE? Well, it was perhaps the best version of "Dragnet" in a comic book form. From the wording of the splash page through page #5 (and one of the great "Dragnet" lines "Can I pass on that? Being you!") the only things missing were the George Fenneman statement and the theme song.

A funny thing about Ms. Tree. In spite (or perhaps because) of her war with the Muerta family, her having a foster son, and a family of sorts with her detective agency, one doesn't think of her as having a family or anything close to a family life. There wasn't much of a feeling that her father was still on the police force, or that she had any other living relatives. So when that threat was made about Friday's daughter. Ms. Tree was the only person who came to mind.

The other things worth noting. Ms. Tree's sister calling her Michelle instead of Michael, the father's other scrapbook which held clippings on Ms. Tree's career.

The only complaint was that there was only room for one Ms. Tree chapter. Take it as a compliment that the next chapter can't come quick enough. As for the Johnny Dynamite stories, they were okay but not knockouts. It might be that both tales weren't from the "A" stack, or that the Ms. Tree story is hands down better.

The half tone work on the Ms. Tree story did look fine, but since the Johnny Dynamite tales will run in Black & White, as do the Mike Mst Minute Mysteries, perhaps now would be the time to drop the half-tones period. Let Ms. Tree run in a film-noir style for once (maybe Ted Turner will attempt to color her for us.)

Hurricane Heeran, VAN NUYS, CA

What do the rest of you think? Time to try an all black-and-white issue? Terry assures me he would do some gray tones in place of the color overlays, so it wouldn't be a stark black and-white look. Opinions?

Max and Terry -

I was relieved to learn of your decision, Max, to leave the BATMAN book. You have been ill-served by their choice of artists. The latest, Cockrum and a particularly untalented inker, resulted in some of the worst artwork I've seen in a "professional" comic book ever! At this rate, I wouldn't have been surprised to see Paul Reinman draw the next installment.

I'm also wondering how much direct input you had into the di-

rection the stories were to take. I was pretty unhappy with the decision to "redesign" Jason Todd's origin so very soon after he was initially introduced. This doesn't speak well for DC's Department of Future Planning.

Well, as you are wont to say in MS TREE's letter column, it's only comic books. But my expectations for your run on the BATMAN title were so high that I was particularly disappointed by the end result. Thanks for dumping out before your own reputation was tarnished in the process.

On the other hand, I'm certain I'll enjoy WILD DOG. A solid concept that's very much along the lines of what you're known for, Terry's always-improving artwork (I admit it - I'm a fan now!), and the mini-series concept to allow you to tell a real story, with beginning, middle and end. Very much looking forward to it. Where does the line start for a T-shirt?

As for MS TREE, I read with disappointment Terry's comments in a recent CBG about the downturn in dealer orders for MS TREE. Terry linked this trend with the recent dealer/distributor paranoia over black and whites in general. I'm sure he's at least partially right here - I'm seeing the same rampant, illogical paranoia on the storefront level. And while my store owner knows I'd likely come at him with a gun should he stop carrying MS TREE, you can't expect every TREE fan to be as vociferous in his defense of the book.

I do wonder, however, if your decision to reprint JOHNNY DYNAMITE has something to do with the downturn in pre-orders as well. As much of a DYNAMITE fan as I am (as you know, since I've already written to congratulate you on the wisdom of buying rights to the character), I admit disappointment at TREE's stories being cut down by half. I hope this is a temporary situation to allow you both to complete WILD DOG. Even as a monthly, 12 pages don't cut it, especially since this makes each issue a cliffhanger. I also get the feeling you're trying to "cram" more story into a shorter space now, but what gets lost in the dash to tell a solid story is a sense of pacing that only a full-issue comic story can allow for. Whereas a good story is usually like a roller coaster, with peaks and valleys and turns and loops, I feel the new, shorter chapters are all peaks, with no time to catch my breath or think about what I'm reading. Overall, not as satisfying.

In a perfect world, I'd love to see DYNAMITE immediately graduate to his own book, returning MS TREE to Ms. Tree herself. This may not be financially feasible right now, but when things die down for your other commitments, I hope you'll consider some other option.

Another option, which may also be a pipedream, would be to do as Eclipse has with AIRBOY, turn it into a bi-weekly, so the cliffhangers are more effective.

If DYNAMITE was brought aboard to give you and Terry more breathing room each month, that idea won't make sense. But again, I must say that I feel cheated, even as a DYNAMITE fan, to see him take up half the book each month - and have the other half eternal cliffhangers, which will make each story take twice as long to tell - hardly conducive to the sort of longer storylines you are known for.

It's a definite dilemma. You have my support either way, of course - a month without MS TREE would be unthinkable. But I hope you're considering all your options for this book right now, because it's obviously a crucially important time not to lose any readers.

Thanks for your time, and continued success to you both!

Jeff Gelb, LOS ANGELES, CA.

I've said about all I care to where BATMAN is concerned. I can only add that I am proud of the scripts that I wrote there, and that those scripts read considerably better than the comic books that were based upon them. You've probably witnessed the discussion, pro and con, about our format. It's here to stay - for now. The success of WILD DOG - the feature will be back, next year, in one form or another - means that MS. TREE will have to maintain its current form, or cease to exist, giving way to occasional miniseries or graphic novels. We would have to have a circulation approximately twice that of what we currently have for this book to

return to a monthly, non-back-up feature status

Dear Max,

I just wanted to express my concern about the new format **Ms. Tree**. I ended up buying #36 & 37 together. By that time three different people had told me that, what with only 12 pages of **Ms. Tree**, the same \$2.00 cover price, and black-and-white Johnny Dynamite reprints, they had chosen to stop buying the title on a regular basis. There are going to be people who react like that whenever there's a change, of course, but I feel those three people are significant because they're all the people I know who buy **Ms. Tree**. If a similar demographic change carries over across your readership, you guys are in big trouble, sales-wise.

How do I feel about the new format? Well, I'm not completely happy with it, either. I'm pleased to hear you're doing work for DC: you deserve the exposure as well as the financial rewards. But so far it seems that I'm paying the same price every month but getting less **Ms. Tree**. It's not that I mind the anthology format so much. I'm pretty happy after all with titles like **Scout** and **Airboy** that use it. I guess the real problem is that I don't seem to share your enthusiasm for the Johnny Dynamite stories. Maybe they're going to get better, but so far they haven't impressed me much. And of course they're not even duotone. Don't cut the letters page, please. That would be the last straw.

As far as #37, I wonder how many people read the hint you dropped in **Files of Ms. Tree** as to who Michael's father was? It's out in the open now, I guess. Is it me, or does it seem like a lot of police detectives are getting shot these days in **Ms. Tree**?

I think the major change you're going to get with the shorter, 12-page stories is that you'll have faster pacing. This works well in **Airboy** and it certainly fits the original concept of **Ms. Tree's Thrilling Detective Adventures**, but I'm afraid we'll see less of one of this title's most interesting aspects. Namely the reactions bystanders always have to Michael's typically violent problem solutions. We'll just have to see how it works out.

Didn't Mike Most used to get the black-and-white-and-one-other color treatment? Maybe it's just that, but Gary's artwork looked rather humdrum in "Answer Phoney." Scratchy, sort of.

Don Rice SANTA MONICA, CA

Don, the sales on MS TREE issue #35 - our last issue in the old format - was the worst selling issue in the history of the book. Since then, we have slowly but steadily been climbing back up to where we were. There is no sign whatsoever that the new format has negatively impacted our sales. Hey - when the hell did "impact" turn into a verb? Just wondering.

Dear Max,

In terms of delving into the character of **Ms. Tree**, "Like Father" may well be the most important "**Ms. Tree**" story yet. Sure, we've seen her reactions to abortion, pornography, child abuse, etc., but nothing quite so personal as this, since her husband died. Her becoming a P.I. was as much influenced by her father as by Mike, and therefore it's fortunate that allegations about his being crooked were unfounded, as that would have been a crushing blow. But now she has the side of righteousness to pursue as well as her own personal need for revenge, which makes it an easier task. I'm sure that she'll discover that someone she thinks of as a friend in this business turns out to be on the other side, but I don't suppose that this will shock her any more than it would the readers, as both she and we are used to finding villains in every closet. Her sister has so far been classed as almost the classic rich-kid college dropout, even if she's neither of those, and no doubt **Ms. Tree** feels some sort of responsibility for this - the adventure will, I'm sure, leave them either very close or bitter enemies, assuming they both survive.

I'm not as happy with 12 pages of **Ms. Tree** as I was before, I have to admit. Maybe a series of 3-month mini-series will have to become the norm, if **WILD DOG** (which I thoroughly enjoyed the

first issue of) takes off. Whatever happens, I hope you don't just drop our favourite female P.I., whom I would certainly mention amongst my favourite comics. She's been around for longer than the majority of books on the shelves, including most from Marvel and DC in fact, and deserves to stay there. How are plans for further reprint collections coming? I really would like to see some more colour "**Ms. Tree**" adventures - I even thought those early Eclipse issues looked nice in colour, although I recall reading that Terry thought the colouring wasn't that good.

I've also just read your interview in **Amazing Heroes**, which I found very interesting. Your background as a novelist certainly means that you tell a comic story better than most. I recall reading a comment by Dave Mazzuchelli that bringing in influences from outside comic art is what's really necessary to expand that field, and I'm sure that there's a similar effect in writing.

Meanwhile, back in the letters page, I was rather sorry that you took Scott Gramme to task, as I was about to do it myself. There's no contradiction between using melodrama to explore serious subjects, and I'm glad you made the point about art in a comic having the function of telling the story. Obviously, it also needs to look visually pleasing, given the fact that this is a visual as well as a written form of storytelling, but to me the art of, say, Terry Beatty or Dan Spiggle is just as good, and impressive, as that of George Perez or Art Adams. There again, you know I like your methods of doing comics, because I buy them in the first place. Roll on **MS TREE** 39, until then, as always, take care.

Malcolm Bourne, LONDON, England

Let me address your question about further reprint collections of MS TREE - good news for our readers and for the future of MS TREE. We have just signed with Paperjacks, who will be bringing out two MS TREE collections in mass-market paperback. These will be standard paperback size, not in any of the oversize graphic novel formats. Each page will be a shot-down comic-book page, and each book will contain upwards of 140 pages of story. The idea is to make each paperback a reading experience comparable to that of reading a novel (the first book will contain "Runaway" and "Muerta Means Death," the latter being the title of the collection). We will be part of Paperjacks' new "Bogies's" line of mystery novels, edited by Billy and Karen Palmer of Bogie's restaurant in New York. We had several tempting offers from firms wanting to do slick ELFQUEST-like albums of MS TREE, and we hope to appear in that format as well, one day. But for now, getting MS TREE out to a wider reading audience - particularly fans of mystery fiction, who normally might be put off by mere "comic books" - is key.

Dear Max,

I'm somewhat of a newcomer to this letterhack business, so bear with some rambling. What finally got me off my duff? Two things: the news that **MS TREE** #34 made the Lansing P.D.'s Official List of Obscene Publications, and the surprisingly querulous reaction of one-third of your correspondents to your revised format. Taking the second item first: I find it astonishing that anyone in **MS TREE**'s (presumably) mature readership could be so naive about the current state of comics economics, especially in the independent/alternative/B & W/whatever market. When I began looking into comics less than a year ago, I was frankly surprised to find that the fan-oriented magazines were far more informative on the business and creative aspects of the form than similar publications about film, television, and even literature. Whether this is as it should be is another debate for another forum; the point here is that more than enough source material is readily available to demonstrate that your format change was necessary for the maintenance of a monthly schedule. Of course, Renegade's late shipments have pretty much made **MS TREE** a bi-monthly anyway... Sorry, cheap shot. I think I speak for the wide majority of the readers when I say that we'll take our **TREE** any way we can, even if it means getting the May issue on July 1st (reversing the mainstream companies' practice of dating four

months ahead?) Let that be your new slogan "Always late Always great!"

Turning to Lansing IL, where #34 is an added starter in the Friendly Frank's bust I'm not too familiar with most of the other books named in the indictment, but having just read all three issues of "Runaway II," I can state categorically that I've seen TV treatments of the same subject matter that weren't as clean and non-explosive as yours. But the Watch-And Warders of today believe that to acknowledge the existence of a problem is to condone or even to encourage it (Except, of course when you can use it as a club against your political or religious opponents) What's the answer? I wish I knew A Mature Audience label might help, but almost all the books on the Lansing List were clearly marked Adults Only, and that didn't stop the bust I only hope that the jury that hears this case shows some sense of fairness, and intelligence, and calls this bust for what it is - a politically loaded fraud

Note that I haven't yet written anything about the actual content of the comic Sorry about that, but my custom is to wait until I have the whole continuity in hand, then read the whole thing at once Less frustrating that way (Not to seem a whiner, but those two or three panels a day of DICK TRACY are like being eternally caught in the world's longest traffic jam - when it takes a whole week's worth of strips just to kill one character, the character's not the only one who suffers You know this already, and you have a sympathizer)

One other matter in the form of a quibble, in the name of truth in packaging, you should inform your readers that the TOR paperback editions of your Nate Heller novels do not contain the photo illustrations that made the hardback editions truly memorable The books themselves are top drawer, no question, but for me, the photos are the icing on the cake When I've recommended them to friends, I use the photos as a selling point, and when they get the paperback and the faces aren't there, well, put yourself in that place, I'm sure TOR had good solid economic reasons for dropping the photos, and I respect that. But it does make a difference

I hope that, in spite of the griping I've made clear that I'm an admirer, and look forward to more of Ms Tree, and Dick Tracy, and Nate Heller, and Mallory, and all the rest Nil Carborundum

Michael D Doran, HOMETOWN IL

We've been late lately, no question - and we'll be working toward staying on schedule better in the months to come. Dealing with WILD DOG played hell with MS TREE, so we'll be leaning hard on Gary Kato, when the next round of WD comes 'round. As for the Friendly Frank bust, let me respond to that indirectly: Terry and I have been battling with the local chapter of the smugly self-righteous "Legion of Decency," the national version of which is run by Donald Wildmon (I always want to add "Fischer" after his name) We attempted to attend a local meeting on the "pornography problem" at our public library and were treated rudely, to say the least, when we suggested the first amendment was a good idea. Terry has written several brilliant (my characterization, not his) letters on this subject, to our local paper, I'm going to try to get him to publish them here, in the coming months, as well

As for the Nate Heller books, TOR's edition of TRUE DETECTIVE **does** contain photos, though not as many as the hardcover, TRUE CRIME and MILLION-DOLLAR WOUND have no photos in the paperback edition. TOR feels that the photos do not look good on the paper stock they must use My own position is that the photos are neither icing nor cake they are an extra - a scoop of ice cream, maybe, they are not part of the novel, proper For example, reviewers review the books based upon galley proofs that do not contain the photos - which means whatever notices I get, good or ill, are based upon the prose I write, not the handful of period photos I select to accompany that prose. I like the fact that the photos only appear in the higher priced edition, it's an incentive for readers to shell out the extra bucks... or to put it less cynically, it gives those who choose to buy the hardback edition more for their money

Dear Max,

I haven't read MS TREE 39 yet, but I did read the letter column and all the hub-bub over "Johnny Dynamite" and the new format, after it was pointed out to me by the owner of my local comics shop And for your personal information I **did** buy issue 39, even after my written resignation

Well anyway after reading your answer to my letter, your intro, and the "Message from Terry," (in that order) I felt the need to write I wouldn't call this an apology, and it's not another threat I just feel like I need to justify myself explain myself maybe - after taking into consideration your position and thinking back on those last few whiny letters I wrote I'd appreciate it if you'd just sit back, and waste five of your minutes listening to me ramble

Because I read your answer to my letter before anything else I was - truthfully - offended by your "So long, baby" remark. I don't know why I guess, because I've loyally read and written MS TREE for so long I didn't expect such a bitter response Regardless, my feelings were then changed to that of guilt, because when I then read the intro I got the ol' "sorry to see you go" response Originally, this was probably the type of response I expected, but now that I got it, it made me feel guilty! You go figure Anyway, taking heed to your directions, I then went and read the "Message from Terry" Well all I can say is that I sympathize with you guys and with your situation Very big of me, isn't it? If I was in your shoes, I would most definitely do the same thing You've got to live off something now, don't you? Ah, but if you'll notice, I said "if I was in your shoes." What would you do if you were in mine? No, maybe that's not a fair question. I'm not trying to make you feel guilty or anything I just hope you realize that my arguments are just as valid as yours. I ask nothing else

With that out of the way, I feel a need to inform you that for now at least, I'm still reading MS TREE I've been a supporter of you guys for quite some time now, and strangely enough, it's not that easy dropping your book Hell, I had a lot easier time dropping DREADSTAR ALIEN LEGION and a slew of others I also think because I no longer read those "books." I have more money to spend on yours As the months go by, I find myself growing tired with more and more of the material on the stands So much of the stuff I used to enjoy now turns my stomach (But don't worry, I'm now nineteen as of three weeks ago, and I don't read about a "teen anything")

Usually I like to think - my letters have some sort of message I try to make it so they have some sort of concrete conclusion (whether or not I succeed is up to you, please, let me fantasize) This letter unfortunately, doesn't seem to have one. The one message (if you'd call it that) that I'd like to get across is that I'm still here as a reader for an indefinite amount of time Because I enjoy your output so much I'll continue supporting your efforts for as long as I can mentally and physically afford I don't think you could ask for anything more

With that off my chest, I feel much better How about you? I'd like to think I've portrayed myself and my thoughts rationally, without making myself look like a sap How'd I do?

And in a couple of days, you'll probably get another "uninhibited" letter from me, commenting on Ms. Tree and the unrealistic views of some of my fellow readers, but **this time without** the complaints Take care of yourself, Max, and hopefully I'll get a chance to see you this summer at the San Diego Comic Convention I'll be one of the few people who **isn't** wearing a pair of Speedos and a cape, unsuccessfully attempting to look like the boy wonder Or is that Jim Shooter?

Chns Romano

How did you do, Chns? You did just fine. Frankly, we expected some of our loyal readers who'd jumped ship prematurely to reconsider, although we didn't anticipate some of our typically smart ass remarks like "So long, baby" and "I'll throw you down the stairs" to be taken so seriously I find it interesting that fans who wrote very negative, indignant letters got offended when we returned in tongue-in-cheek kind I was at San Diego Chns, but we didn't meet. Maybe next time. "baby"

ORIGINAL MS. TREE ARTWORK FOR SALE. Pages are \$50.00 each, except those marked with an *, which are \$40.00 each (* indicates page contains pasted-up photocopy - usually a flash-back panel).

Make check or money order payable to: Terry Beatty, P.O. Box 1007, Muscatine, IA 52761.

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"The only reason Kilgore is being published by Renegade Press is that I happened to bump into Deni at a post office," quipped Kilgore creator Brian Chin.

These days Chin works mostly in television storyboarding, although he has worked on low budget horror movies as a miniature builder and in special effects. "Mostly Roger Corman movies," Chin said, but he has also worked on "Star Trek II" (with Industrial Light and Magic), "Escape From New York", and "Battle Beyond the Stars".

Artistic influences include Wally Wood, Russ Heath, Herge and John Severin. "I tend to think more in terms of movies than comics when I draw," Chin explained. His favorite movie auteurs are Orson Welles and Jack Webb.

Chin came up with the character of Kilgore while working at the Presidio Army Museum in San Francisco. "That's where I saw photos of the real Kilgore. I've been working on Kilgore for the past ten years."

While Chin created Kilgore and plots and draws the title, he hands over the actual writing to his buddy from college, Steve Jarvis.

This is Jarvis' first published work as well as Chin's first comic book.



This action-packed adventure series is set mostly during World War II. A cross between Errol Flynn and Sgt. Bilko, Colonel Kilgore is a schemer and a dreamer who's always one step ahead of his superiors when the kudos are being handed out.

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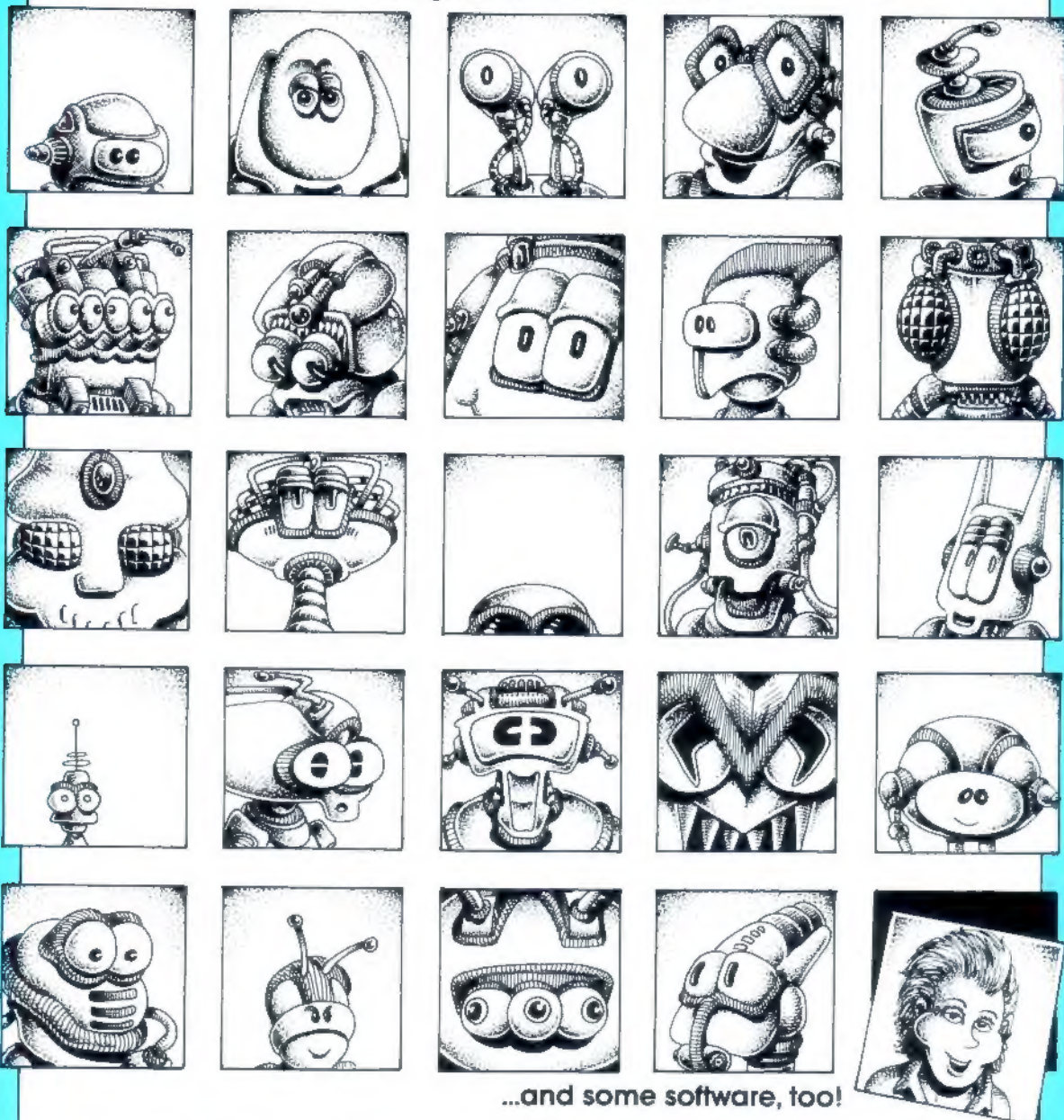
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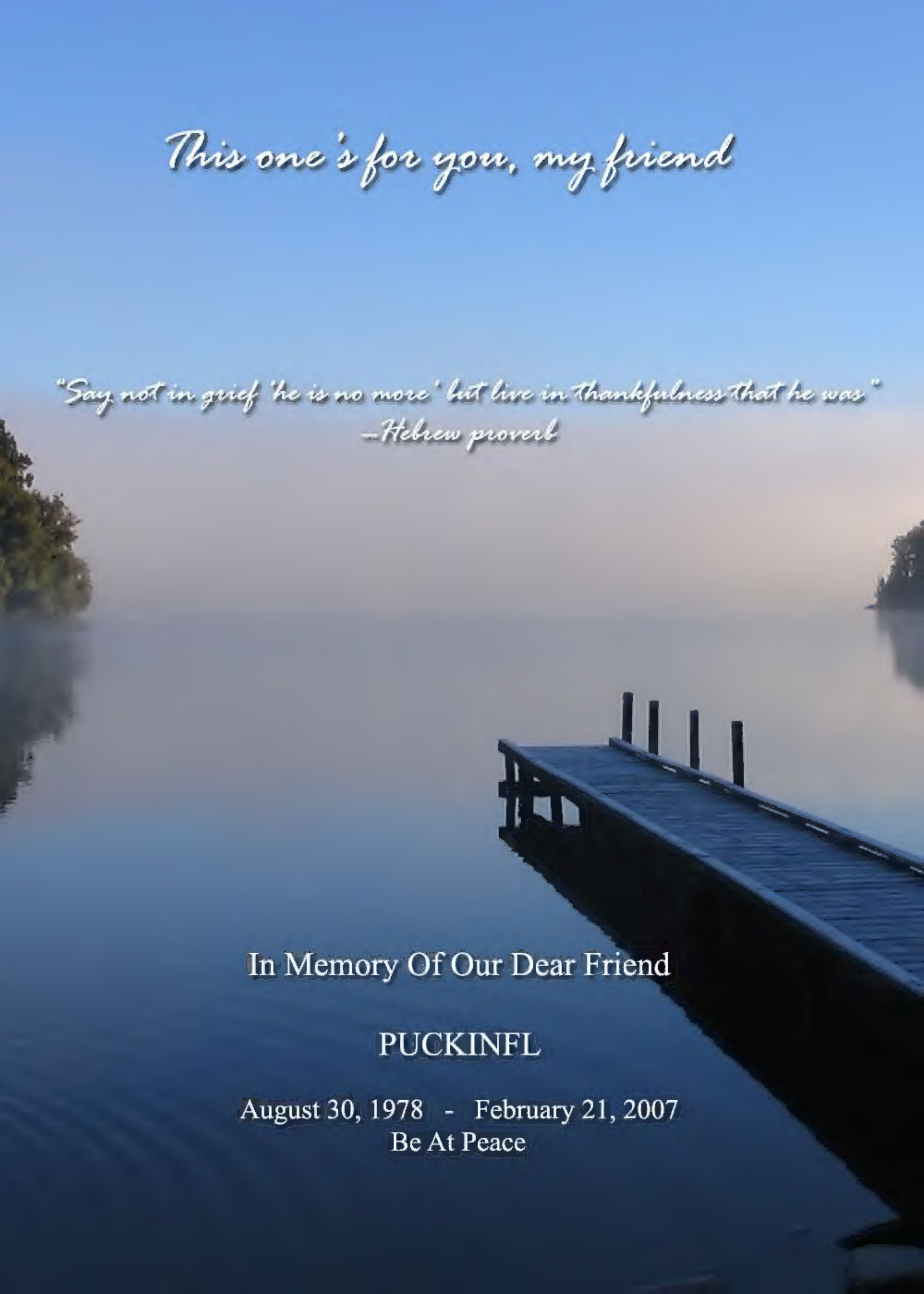
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